

**GHOST TOWN USA**

**Proudly Presents our**

**GHOST TOWN OF THE  
MONTH  
July 2015**

**\*A BI-STATE GHOST  
GLENRIO**

**Deaf Smith County, Texas  
Quay County, New Mexico**

by

[Gary B. Speck](#)

**STRADDLING the  
state line JUST SOUTH OF**

**INTERSTATE 40, *Glenrio straddles the New Mexico/Texas State***

line. This old Route 66 icon is falling into disrepair, yet is still a popular stopping point for Mother Road chasers, ghost towners, as well as those looking for a new adventure along America's Superlabs. You don't need a four wheel drive to reach this ghost, nor do you need super map researching skills. Glenrio sits just a half-mile southeast of the modern Glenrio Rest Stop/Welcome Center, and a quarter-mile south of the NM-TX state line, and one of America's busiest Interstates, I-40. It can be reached in less than a minute and even has its own offramp. Eastbound travelers, take the first Texas exit, while westbound folks take the last Texas exit - Exit 0 (as in ZERO) - 41 miles east of Tucumcari, NM and 73 miles west of Amarillo, TX.

From either offramp, head south (200 feet for eastbound folks, and 0.3 mile for westbound folks) to the old highway. At the junction stop sign turn right and head west, back towards New Mexico. In a few seconds you're in the heart of this wonderful little ghost. Along the north side of the freeway, and just north of the Deaf Smith/Oldham County lines are a pair of abandoned gas stations that date to Glenrio's attempt at a relocation after I-40 opened.

At the time of our late afternoon visit back in July 2012 the weather was running windless, 100° and with eyeglass-fogging humidity. Other than the thwap-thwap sound of tires verses expansion joints along the Interstate, the place was silent as a tomb. The site is overgrown, chigger-laden, pokey-pointed grasses and prickly bushes hiding broken glass, rattlesnakes and other lower extremity-stabbing debris. My senses tuned in to the possible dangers faster than an airport TSA agent on a full terrorism alert.

Glenrio is not an old ghost town, dating only to 1903 when the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad established a siding on the state line along its Amarillo-Tucumcari line. It was first called Rock Island (after the railroad), but in 1908 was renamed Glenrio. The old adage about building it and they will come held true here. The railroad station quickly attracted outlying ranchers, and the station quickly grew into an agricultural and ranching shipment center filled with wood frame and adobe buildings. The bustling railroad town had a large, adobe-walled hotel (*Glenrio Hotel* - blt 1910), a barbershop, Methodist Church, hardware store, newspaper (*Glenrio Tribune*

1910-1934), railroad depot (closed in 1955), restaurants, schoolhouse (1912) and a town hall.

Around 1925, a rough, dirt automobile road called the Ozark Trail followed the railroad into town, and automobile travelers began to stop. Glenrio sat near the midway point of what grew into the main route between Chicago and Los Angeles, and when US 66 was christened, it was poised to take advantage of its strategic position on the road. Numerous automobile traveler amenities popped up, including the Broyles Mobil Station joined the growing list. As the 1930s Dust Bowl devastated the American Heartland, the highway became the escape route for countless thousands of Dust Bowl refugees all heading for California. Whether travelers headed east or west on what quickly became America's most famous cross-country highway - Route 66 - Glenrio was a shining star on the great Mother Road for nearly a half century. When WWII ended, and America fell in love with roadtripping, Glenrio exploded with the trend. Although the resident population never exceeded 100, Glenrio seemed much bigger. The few residents here mostly catered to the countless thousands of motorists in need or want.

The door slammed shut on Glenrio in September 1973. Interstate 40 opened, just a quarter-mile to the north, and even with the offramp leading folks into town, the Superslab sucked the lifeblood out of Glenrio. By mid-decade shuttered windows and "Closed" sign-decorated front doors were the norm. To avoid turning itself into a history book name, a few hundred yards north of town a pair of gas stations and a café/convenience store popped up along the westbound freeway offramp. Glenrio struggled to keep the spark alive, with a couple of the businesses having relocated north.

During the half-century boom of the mid-1920s-early 1970s its location straddling the state line gave birth to some unique issues. When gas taxes were lower in Texas, gas stations moved east of the line. Deaf Smith County (TX) was alcohol free, Quay County (NM) was not, so the State Line Bar popped up on the New Mexico side of the state line. Back and forth the issues went.

Today, Glenrio is a faded as most of our early 1970s photos are. The color has drained, the edges have frayed, and empty windows and doorless door frames stare out into the past. About the only folks who visit are followers

of Ghost Town USA stopping by to say "Howdy!" From east to west, the remains of the town string out about 0.6 miles, and are easy to walk, except in 100° heat and 100% humidity! Our tour will start in the east and work its way west.

Just west of the stop sign, is an unidentified, crumbling concrete slab of a former structure, whose use I have not determined. With no buildings or ruins standing above the greenery, it is easy to miss. Just to the west is another similarly overgrown slab and debris, and beyond them are three other buildings. These housed the 1950ish *art-moderne* Texaco station and the tiny 1952 Brownlee Diner (later called the Juarez Café), which front the Joseph Brownlee House, which was built in 1930 and relocated from Amarillo in 1950. At the time of our visit, the Brownlee home was occupied and guarded by an evil-tempered stealth dog that disliked the heat and humidity even more than me. Please note that this little complex of buildings IS posted, so please abide by the owner's wishes.

Continuing west along the north side of the old highway, the next building of note nuzzles up against the state line. This is the famous complex housing a repair garage, Phillips 66 gas station, State Line Café built in 1953 and a motel. The Texas Longhorn Motel is famous for being the "Last Motel in Texas" for westbound folks and the "First Motel in Texas" for eastbound folks. Built in 1955, it too is well posted against trespass.

Crossing the state line into New Mexico, next up is the 1930's-era State Line Motel. It sets back from the street and sort of behind a 1960s, generic government-looking, concrete block building and a cluster of mail boxes. Despite the government look, it is a highly modified, refaced adobe built in 1935. It originally housed the State Line Bar and Texaco Gas Station. A little wooden building on the left hand side appears in both my photo and an online 1930s view from the same angle. In that 80-year old shot, the little wooden building looks the same, and is identified as the post office. After the bar closed, the post office appears to have relocated into the larger building.

Continuing to the west is a gas station built in 1925. This wonderful old combination adobe and wood framed building built by Mr. Broyles is rapidly

deteriorating, its saggy front canopy nearing its final rest. To the west is another one-time gas station and an adobe home.

Glenrio is dead, with a capital DEAD. The businesses are gone. The highway is gone. Even the railroad is gone, having pulled tracks in the 1980s. Most of the people are gone, but a few still do live here and some properties are posted. When you visit, please respect their rights and obey all signage. Remember, this is still their home. Scattered across the site are additional small dead structures, dead cars and dead stuff, all of which are mixed in with explorer-unfriendly vegetation. Enjoy all posted buildings from the road shoulder and watch for ill-tempered snakes, chiggers and canines.

As always, when you visit, please abide by any [posted signage](#), respect the rights of the property owners and always abide by the [Ghost Towner's Code of Ethics](#).

This is our **CURRENT** Ghost Town of the Month for July 2015.

**\* NOTE:** For photos and a more in-depth vignette of Fort Columbia, go to our linked [GLENRIO](#) page.

**LOCATION:**

SITE NAME	ELE V.	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	TOWNSHIP/RANGE
Glenrio	3855'	35.1789464 / 35° 10' 44" N	-103.0421683 / 103° 02' 32" W	E-Ctr Sec 17, T11N, R36E, NMPM (New Mexico Principal Base Line & Meridian) (NM Part ONLY)
Glenrio freeway gas stations (Oldham Co., TX)		35.1841122 (ctr of both)	-103.0328107 (ctr of both)	Public Land Survey System (Section/Range/Township) NOT USED in TX
Glenrio Rest Stop (Quay Co.,		35.1837154	-103.0487108	

NM)				
Slab "A"		35.1797014	-103.0355036	
Slab "B"		35.1793244	-103.0387411	
Joseph Brownlee House		35.1796488	-103.0393472	
1950 Texaco Station		35.1793704	-103.0394331	
Brownlee Diner/Juar ez Café		35.1793551	-103.0397093	
Horse Corral		35.1795151	-103.0410102	
Texas Longhorn Motel		35.1793748	-103.0421099	
State Line Café/Phillips 66 station		35.1790284	-103.0421394	
NM/TX State Line		35.1787017	-103.0424787	(Center of street at state line)
State Line Motel		35.1790339	-103.0430326	
State Line Bar/Texaco station		35.1788179	-103.0432619	
Post Office (1930s)		35.1788234	-103.0433477	
1925 Broyles Mobile Gas station		35.1787752	-103.0436119	
1946 Ferguson Gas Station		35.1785823	-103.0453433	
Angel House		35.1790262	-103.0452025	

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